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MONTANA LETTER

November 15, 1972

ASCS BALLOTS GO IN MAIL

This Friday the "behind the scenes" work ASC people have been doing since September will become visible as thousands of election envelopes go into the mail. It's quite a job.

Last year ballots went to 54,005 eligible Montana voters with the greatest number in Roosevelt county (2,899) and the fewest in Deer Lodge (107). The mailing this year is expected to be about the same.

Although we try to send a ballot to every known eligible voter, the broad nature of voting eligibility almost guarantees that some will be missed. We hope anyone who is missed and believes he is eligible to participate in the election will visit or call his ASCS office early in the voting period for an eligibility determination.

In general, any farm or ranch owner, operator, tenant or sharecropper who is eligible to participate in a program administered by ASCS is eligible to vote. These elections are conducted without regard to race, color, creed, sex, or national origin.

Last year, about 37 percent of those people considered eligible to vote returned completed ballots to their ASCS office. We hope there will be a much higher percentage of participation this year. ASCS is a unique organization where farmers and ranchers elect from among their own number the people who

are to direct their programs. A high degree of participation in elections not only demonstrates interest but also assures committeemen who are elected that they have been chosen in an election with general participation.



Hundreds of thousands of envelopes like these will be in the mail during the next few weeks as agricultural people across the Nation elect ASCS committeemen for 1973. Balloting ends December 1.

We urge voters to follow carefully the instructions printed on the ballot. These include the number of persons to vote for, write-ins and use of the plain and printed envelopes so that eligibility of each ballot can be determined but its secrecy can be preserved. Ballots must be postmarked December 1 or delivered to the ASCS county office by 5 p.m. that day.

If you or anyone with whom you may

talk has questions about voting eligibility or procedure, we hope you will help them or refer them to their ASCS office.

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION...

Reading a news release by a prominent law enforcement officer about people who have had their cars stolen when they left the keys in the ignition reminded us of a somewhat similar circumstance that farmers face with farm stored grain.

We have heard of at least two instances in Montana where thieves have used the farmers' own equipment to remove grain from isolated farm storage bins. In both instances augers were stored close to the granaries and it was a simple matter for the thieves to start up the auger, fill the truck, and drive off with little effort.

It might be wise to consider moving augers back to the home place, removing the engine, drive belts, or turning off the power supply to discourage such thefts.

AUSTRALIAN WOOL OUTLOOK DOWN

Australia, which unlike the United States, has been increasing wool production in recent years, is forecasting a downturn for the 1972-73 crop. In fact, the Commonwealth Secretariat in London reports that Australian output may not reach even the 1.7 billion pounds projected for the 72-73 season. Even at the projected level of 1.7 billion pounds the clip would be one of the smallest crops for several seasons and 9 percent below actual production in 1971-72.

In another sidelight on the wool situation, the Australian Wool Commission is reported to be "virtually bereft" of surplus stock to supplement current production. "For the first time in 20 years there are distinct signs of a

supply shortage of wool", the Secretariat reports.

The main factor behind the recent sharp price rise for wool, according to the Secretariat, has been extremely heavy demand from main consuming countries which are seeking to rebuild stocks in anticipation of supply shortages later this season.

The Australian shortage is attributed to a combination of adverse weather conditions, industrial troubles and sales outside the auction system.

CORRECTION, PLEASE

The goblins must have got to us in our LETTER of October 31. They made us say "buyer" when we intended to say "owner".

It happened in our discussion of authorizations to remove loan collateral from farm storage before repayment of the loan. We wanted to emphasize the responsibility of the owner to repay the loan within the authorization period even though he may not by that date have received payment for the grain removed from storage.



The paragraph, as corrected, would read, "The OWNER also agrees that he will make certain the loan is repaid as soon as the commodity is delivered to the buyer but not later than the date specified in the authorization."

Thanks to all the "sharp eyes" who noted our Halloween boo-boo.

---Farming is exceeded only by mining and construction as a hazardous industry. In 1970 there were 2,400 farm work deaths and 200,000 disabling injuries to put the death rate for agriculture at 67 per 100,000 workers.

LEWIS NAMED COUNTY DIRECTOR

Jack H. Lewis, a Golden Valley county committeeman since 1964, has been appointed acting county executive director for the Musselshell-Golden Valley County office. Jack resigned from the county committee last February to enter our county director trainee program.

He succeeds Roger Leach who resigned to enter private business in Roundup.

Jack is a native of Golden Valley county. He attended schools at Lavina and then Eastern Montana College and the University of Montana. He served in the Army Air Corps during World War II and has ten year's experience as a teacher, coach and elementary principal.

In the early fifties, he became interested in a ranching operation which became a full-time operation in 1960. This included production of small grains and hay, as well as cattle.

In 1964, Lewis was elected vice chairman of the Golden Valley County committee. He was re-elected in 1965, and in 1966 became chairman, a position he held until his resignation.

FEED GRAIN DECISIONS NEAR

The Secretary's National Advisory Committee on Grains is meeting today and tomorrow in Washington to discuss supply

and demand situations for feed grains, wheat and soybeans and consider provisions for next year's feed grain program. Charles B. Anderson, Great Falls, president of the Anderson Grain Company, is one of the 30-member group which includes farmers, processors and dealers.

Shortly following the advisory meeting, a group of ASC State committeemen from feed grain producing States will gather in Washington to give the benefit of their experience in farming and administration to development of the 1973 program.

Roy Killenbeck, Montana committeeman from Scobey, is our representative in this group.

No date has been set for announcing program details, but Dale Helsper, ASCS Northwest Region director, recently said that he feels it will be "Sometime in December--the first part of January before we have it all put together."

Dale also said that he expected the program to be patterned after this year's with no major changes.

"This program last year worked fairly successfully," he said on a recent Farm Program report. "I think the farmers perhaps would like to continue without very many changes in it."

SUGAR SHARES NOT NEEDED

Concurring in the recommendations of growers and processors, USDA has announced there will not be proportionate shares (acreage allotments) on the 1973 crop of sugarbeets.

The action was not unexpected since beet sugar production this year is estimated at 3,300,000 tons, raw value--a quantity 100,000 tons less than this year's adjusted marketing quota for the beet sugar area. The effective inventory on January 1, 1973 (sugar on hand plus



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1972-crop beet sugar produced after that date) will probably be about 1,616,000 tons. This is considerably below the desired inventory level.

Sugarbeets have not been under restrictive shares since 1966. Shares were established for the 1970 crop but rescinded when outturn from the 1969 crop made them unnecessary.

Before making a decision on shares for 1973 growers, processors and any others interested in the question were invited to present their views at a public hearing in Denver on August 17.

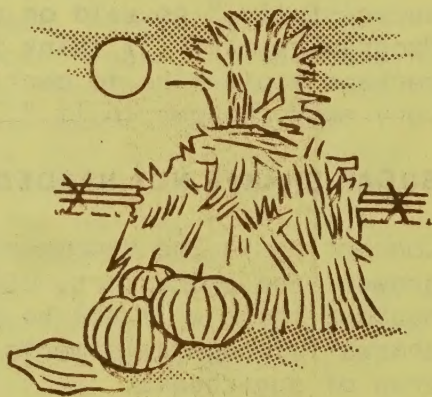
AG EXPORTS STILL HEADED UP

Agricultural exports in the year ending next June are expected to total about \$10 billion, almost \$2 billion more than the previous record high of \$8.1 billion set last year.

Leading the movement is wheat, forecast to increase about 90 percent to over \$2 billion, and feed grain, up 38 percent to \$1.6 billion. In-

creased value is also forecast for all other classes of ag exports excepting dairy and poultry products, down 30 percent, and cotton, down 6 percent despite

a volume increase of 5 percent.



THANKSGIVING 1972

Farm exports this fiscal year are expected to be \$3.5 billion larger than agricultural imports. This favorable

agricultural trade balance would exceed by \$1.2 billion the previous high recorded in 1966/67. This record contribution by agriculture to the Nation's balance of trade helps offset the unfavorable nonfarm balance which was \$7.1 billion in 1971/72.

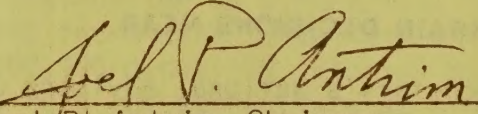
Two-thirds of this year's increase in farm exports is attributed to increased volume and one-third higher prices.

The Soviet Union accounts for about half the total increase forecast for our agricultural exports this year. USSR purchases are now estimated at \$1.2 billion compared with \$150 million last year.

Japan remains the top single-country market for products of our farms and ranches. It is expected to take about \$1.5 billion worth this year, with major increases in wheat, feed grain, fresh fruits, cattle, hides, cotton and tobacco.

SPREADING IT THIN ... AND QUICK

PROPOSED LEGISLATION to increase the number of consecutive terms a person may serve as an ASC county committeeman, though passed by the House of Representatives, got no further in the last Congress... CORN PRODUCTION this year is now estimated at 5.4 billion bushels, only three percent down from last year's record crop and up three percent from the October forecast... P.L. 480 SALES recently include 2 million bushels of hard red spring and hard red winter wheat to Vietnam and 7.3 million bushels of various classes to Korea... NEXT WEEK we pause to thank our Creator for the bounty of this land. We are indeed fortunate.


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